

NAACP dinner emphasizes leadership, activism

By Alexa Agugliaro
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

A crowd of over 200 students erupted in a call and return chant led by Travis Salters, the president of Penn State's chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Sunday night.

This chant marked the beginning of the sixth annual Freedom Fund Dinner, held in the HUB Alumni Hall.

Paul John, the dinner's coordinator, revealed the night's theme: "Still We Rise: Striving for Excellence," which focused mainly on the issues of student leadership and activism.

The keynote speaker of the event was Chuck Williams, an associate professor at Drexel University and inspirational speaker throughout the country. Williams expressed his gratitude to the NAACP for inviting him to the event and described the experience as the "best I've ever seen."

"This generation will do some great things and that is evident in this room," Williams said.

He continued to emphasize leadership and how to be an effective activist not only in school but in all aspects of life.

The night's performers included the United Soul Ensemble, the National Pan-Hellenic Council, the Jackie Renee and the New Deal band and student Raj Suresh, winner of the Freedom Fund Dinner Poetry Contest.

NAACP treasurer Suresh (junior-marketing) recited a poem he wrote entitled "I am here now," which, he said, was a powerful statement everyone should be able to say at some point in their life.

He said his message was about standing up for what the audience believes and constantly question the "norms" of society.

Various student groups gathered to support the NAACP and to learn more about how to be an active leader while also enjoying

the entertainment provided.

University Park Undergraduate Association President Christian Ragland said that as an African American student on campus, it's nice to see an event of this magnitude bringing together people from different backgrounds.

"For me, it's just a night away from the office to enjoy nice performances and hear what the speakers have to say," Ragland (senior-political science) said.

For Gabriel Piza, treasurer of the Latino Caucus, the anticipation leading up to the event had finally paid off. Though it was his first time attending the annual event, he described the experience as "unforgettable."

NAACP vice president Jasmine Rushum said she was very pleased with the turnout of the event.

"This is what the NAACP is all about," Rushum (junior-broadcast journalism and sociology) said.



Nigel Graham/Collegian

Chuck Williams, the keynote speaker at the NAACP's Freedom Fund dinner, speaks to the crowd about effective leadership Sunday night.

To e-mail reporter: ama5453@psu.edu



Daniel Bott/Collegian

Bicycle collector Bob Swaim, of Allentown, rides his wooden bike behind the State College Municipal Building on Friday morning.

Man shows off wooden bicycle

By Lynn Ondrusek
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

It was a strange scene to witness for those who didn't know a wooden bike had come to town.

The bike made its debut in State College Friday morning at the State College Municipal building, and some borough officials went for a ride using the unique mode of transportation.

Mayor Elizabeth Goreham was the first person to ride the \$4,800 bike purchased by Allentown resident Bob Swaim on a recent trip to Las Vegas.

Goreham, an avid cyclist herself, said she enjoyed taking the bike for a spin.

"It was a smooth ride, and there were no splinters," Goreham said. "It's not for everyday riding, but you get used to it."

Other riders Friday morning included Police Chief Tom King, who also said he had a positive experience riding the bike.

"After a few miles, it could be tough, but it is comfortable," King said.

Swaim, who will take the bike home with him this week, said he was excited to see others ride the bike and appreciate the rare piece of art as much as he does.

"I wanted to recapture the Las Vegas moment," he said, referring to when he spotted the bike at a trade show in September.

After the bike was showcased in town, it was taken to the HUB-Robeson Center for a couple of hours where some passersby

couldn't help but stare. "I walked by, looked left and went, 'What the heck?'" Michael Kramer (freshman-English and anthropology) said. "It draws your eye as soon as you see it."

Students and visitors who stopped by were also interested in how the bike moves, in addition to its interesting physical characteristics.

"It's a work of art," HUB employee Randy Hale said. "I've never seen anything like it. It's beautiful."

The bike traveled 2,800 miles from San Jose, Calif., to State College, with the help of two women. One woman works for Master Works Wood and Design, the company that created the bike.

"People are attracted to wood, probably because of its warmth," said Denise Olenak, who sold Swaim the bike.

The wooden bike was made by workers at the San Jose-based company. About 85 to 90 hours of work went into its creation.

With the exception of a few metal parts including a bolt on the handles and screws on the wheels, the bike is entirely composed of maple and mahogany wood.

After its initial construction, the bike was sealed with marine plywood and coated to protect it from the elements.

"Art is usually something you look at, which is functional," he said. "But I believe all bikes to be works of art."

Vet shares WWII experiences

By Kathleen Loughran
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Arthur Seltzer just wanted to forget.

But when his granddaughter called him for help with her fifth-grade report on the Holocaust, he couldn't let her down, so he told her his story as one of the American soldiers who liberated the Dachau concentration camp.

On Friday, Seltzer shared his story again with a small group of students and faculty who attended the First Friday in Jewish Studies run by the Jewish Studies program.

At age 18, Seltzer was drafted into the army. Throughout his time fighting in World War II, he served with 20 different units.

But it wasn't until Seltzer came face to face with the Dachau concentration camp in April of 1945 that he found out exactly what a concentration camp was.

"All the time that we were in the service, we were never told about concentration camps," he said. "We were headed to meet the Russian army ... and looked through a field glass and thought it was a prisoner of war camp."

Seltzer said they originally saw black smoke towering over the mountains, but they didn't know what it was for. Once they realized it was a concentration camp, the 20th Army Division contacted army headquarters, and the next day, sirens could be heard as then-General Dwight D. Eisenhower arrived.

"He immediately contacted me and told us to take as many pictures as we can because they needed to go into record," Seltzer said.

During his speech, Seltzer showed attendees photographs he took of the concentration camp, including 35-pound inmates whose rib cages were visible, prisoners in black and white striped clothing clutching the fence and dead bodies thrown into a pile on the ground.

Attendee Nikolai Toroveci (junior-political science) said the whole story was impacting, but the pictures specifically drew his attention.

Mass trenches were built on the site so German soldiers could have a place to bulldoze the bodies into, Seltzer said.

When Eisenhower arrived, he

made all the American soldiers carry the unburied bodies.

"He told them, 'Don't you dare drag those bodies,'" Seltzer said.

Since the war, Seltzer has had the opportunity to talk to three of the people he liberated — one of whom he unknowingly captured in a picture.

One of the liberated people Seltzer contacted told him a story that he shared at the event.

"In the barracks, there were six inmates that were too weak to come out," he said. "[The inmate Seltzer spoke to] called out his last name and found his father. His father and he were in the same camp, and they didn't even know it. Two weeks later, the father died."

Allison Fox said she was glad she was able to attend the event.

"I thought it was really moving," Fox (senior-psychology) said.

For people who deny the Holocaust happened, Seltzer said he could never "make up something like this."

"It brings back memories that will never go away," he said.

To e-mail reporter: krl5106@psu.edu

Event to focus on 'finding strength'

By Leah Gillen
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Carlee Fishkin said she was surprised by how common sexual assault is on college campuses — including at University Park.

"You don't realize how relevant it is on campus until you get the facts on what is actually considered sexual assault and how often it happens here," Fishkin (senior-public relations) said.

As a project for COMM 473 (Public Relations Campaigns), a group of five students, including Fishkin, and the Commission for Women advisory board put together a sexual assault awareness event — with educational and self-defense portions — that will be held from 7:30 to 9 tonight in the Paul Robeson Cultural Center's Heritage Hall.

Members of the group said the event will emphasize the prevalence of sexual assault on college campuses, as well as the need to work to prevent it.

"It doesn't get talked about much, because it's a touchy issue," group member Michelle Turli (senior-public relations and psychology) said. "This provides a relaxed, inviting atmosphere for

If you go

What: Sexual assault awareness event

When: 7:30 to 9 tonight

Where: Paul Robeson Cultural Center's Heritage Hall

people who want to attend. It's not that everybody faces this issue, but you probably know someone who did, or someone who will in the future."

When the group first met with the Commission for Women in early October, they discovered that the commission had a committee dedicated solely to sexual assault on the Penn State campus.

"Just the fact that there is a need for a committee for that shows that it is a big issue for Penn State students," group member Chelsea Levine (senior-public relations) said.

The event focuses on finding strength as a woman, including portions of the night committed to both inner and outer strength. For the first half of the event, alumna Mary Anne Knapp, a

social worker and counselor for Penn State's Center for Counseling and Psychological Services, will present an informal program focused on minimizing the risk for sexual assault among women at Penn State.

The second half of the program will focus on self-defense. An instructor from Lionheart Fitness will present different defense strategies.

"We're not promoting the idea that you'll fight off an attacker," Turli said. "But you are strong enough to protect yourself and make safe choices."

Originally, the group wanted an event for the self-defense class alone, but soon realized the event needed an educational aspect as well.

"We felt like the two aspects of the event were going to get people to come," said Levine.

"The combination of physical and educational aspects is the best way to get the issue out and deliver a quality product to the students."

The group hopes to have about 100 attendees. While targeted at women, the event is open to all.

To e-mail reporter: lag5257@psu.edu

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